

India Street Neighborhood Study
Daniel Coffin House
25 India Street
Nantucket
Nantucket County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-1050

HABS
MASS
10-NANT
75K-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

INDIA STREET NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY
DANIEL COFFIN HOUSEHABS
MASS
10-NANT
75K-

Location: 25 India Street (on north side), Nantucket,
Massachusetts.

Present Owner: Miss Marjorie Barrett

Present Occupant: Miss Marjorie Barrett

Present Use: Residence

Brief Statement
of Significance: A typical Nantucket house with carpenter classic
trim; part of the India Street Neighborhood Study
(MASS-1013).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1794 -- Mary Morris bought land from George Lawrence through agent Jonathan Jenkins, Jr., and paid 90 pounds.
- 1810 -- Daniel Coffin bought from Charles Morris for \$3000.
- 1828 -- Phoenix Bank by deed from Daniel Coffin.
- 1831 -- Edwin Coffin from Phoenix Bank.
- 1838 -- Joseph H. Nickerson bought from Edwin Coffin for \$2500.
- 1885 -- Rebecca C. Nickerson by will from her husband, Joseph H. Nickerson.
- 1894 -- Rebecca C. Nickerson died at age 95. Her will reads in part: "I give and bequeath to my daughter" (by her first husband, John C. Coffin) "Kezia J. Coffin, and Mary A. Simpson, the use and occupation of my house on Pearl Street during term of natural life of my said daughter Kezia J. Coffin, enjoyed by them equally but no part of said property to be sold during lifetime of my said daughter Kezia".
- 1908 -- Sarah E. Thomas and Mary Louise Standish bought "all her right" from Mary A. Simpson.
- 1918 -- Sarah Elizabeth Thomas and Mary Louise Standish "all her right" from Kezia J. Coffin.
- 1920 -- William H. Barrett from William M. Thomas, widower of Sarah E. Thomas, and Mary Louise Standish.
- 1938 to date -- Marjorie Barrett by deed from William H. and Emma F. Barrett.
(Abstract: Deeds Recorded in Registry of Deeds, Nantucket, Massachusetts.)

2. Date of erection: c. 1794

3. Architect: None
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: House was built as a comfortable and spacious home.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Little changed.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Between 1794 and 1810 George Lawrence sold three pieces of land on India Street on which this house and the two to the side of it on the west were erected.

India Street, later called Pearl Street but eventually changed back to India Street, was provided for in the layout of Wesco Acre Lots in 1678 and was in the Third Squadron at a place commonly known as Micah's Pond. According to the Portfolio written in 1811 it was called India Row, from the number of residents "who reside there in ease and affluence". Westminster Street to the north of India Street was formerly called Clay Lane and Micah's Pond extended from that area to the central part of India Street.

When the property was sold in 1908 it was called 53 Pearl Street in the deed. It is now 25 India Street.

Captain Joseph H. Nickerson sometimes appears in the records as Nicholson. He married Rebecca Coffin, widow of John Gayer Coffin in 1835 and bought this house three years later. It remained in the family from 1838 to 1918. Note terms of will of Rebecca C. Nickerson, which were not carried out.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: Old photograph of Pearl Street in Nantucket Illustrated, by A. Wittemann, New York; Albertype Co., 1888.

Prepared by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin
Nantucket, Massachusetts
June, 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Typical late eighteenth century Nantucket house, two stories, high basement; originally rectangular in plan with various appendages; gable roof, central chimney, off-center entrance with Greek revival porch.
2. Condition of fabric: Good; interior modifications to accommodate multi-family occupancy and changing needs.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions, including ell: 43'-0" by 66'-6".
2. Foundations: Red clay brick painted gray, rubble stone at sides and rear.
3. Wall construction: Wood frame, weathered 4"-5" exposed cedar shingles, plain board pilasters at corners of street (south) elevation.
4. Structural system: Post and lintel platform system with posts exposed at interior corners.
5. Porches: Greek revival porch at India Street entry, fluted Doric columns with classical entablature, flat hip roof, two opposing stairs from street to porch level, cylindrical balusters and molded rail in balustrade, square newels; wood stoops at secondary entrances.
6. Chimneys: Multi-flue chimneys in house and appendage, brick construction.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorway and doors: Street doorway is off-center, seven-panel door with side lights of translucent glass with a floral pattern indented and transparent (interior door has a matching panel).
 - b. Windows: Single hung windows of various sizes two-over-two, six-over-six, twelve-over-twelve; no shutters; projecting wood plank window frames, mortise and tenon joints with wood dowel fasteners.
8. Roof: Gable roof on house and ell, shed at rear; asphalt shingle roofing; boxed cornice at south and north edge of roof with wood gutter, metal downspouts, board trim at gables.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans (first floor only included in survey): The entry and stairhall is entered from the porch with a parlor to the west, stairway to the second floor, closet and buttry (now one space) accessible from the hall and from the old kitchen behind the entry; "borning room", a traditional first-floor bedroom is at the northwest corner behind the parlor and old kitchen; the east entry into hall separated the house and ell, closet and bath attached; miscellaneous sitting-dining and kitchen spaces in ell; stairway to second floor spaces in ell. Second floor and cellar inaccessible.

2. Stairways: Stairways include front staircase in entry hall to second floor, stairway in ell from cellar to second floor.
 - a. Front staircase: L-shaped staircase, turned balusters and newels, scroll-sawed pattern on string.
 - b. Rear stairway: Straight runs from first floor to cellar and to second floor spaces in ell.
3. Flooring: Miscellaneous old pine boards, natural finish, nailed with cut nails.
4. Walls and ceilings: Plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Four panel.
6. Decorative features and trim: Typical Nantucket house noted for its simplicity, with decoration limited to articulation of structural system and utilitarian trim. Paneled wainscot.
7. Heating: Modern hotwater system, oil fired, with convectors and radiators; fireplaces in principal rooms (some closed), marble fireplace surrounds and mantels are not original, cast iron coal grates and screens.

D. Site and Surroundings:

The Daniel Coffin House faces south on India Street, a macadam paved street edged with granite curbs and brick sidewalk; grass yards at west and north; paved area between this house and one to the east; wood fence at west and north property lines of rectangular palings with top strip; gates at street match balustrade of #27 India Street.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves
Nantucket, Massachusetts
June, 1970

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the India Street Neighborhood Study (MASS-1013) made in the summer of 1970 by the Historic American Buildings Survey on Nantucket, Massachusetts. This is the fifth summer project of a continuing HABS comprehensive survey of the early architecture and urban design of Nantucket financed by a grant from the Nantucket Historical Trust.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Director was Professor F. Blair Reeves, A.I.A., of the University of Florida.

Historical information was provided by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographs are by Jack E. Boucher of Linwood, New Jersey. The material was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Mrs. Constance Werner Ramirez, August 1971.